REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the Office Action mailed May 2, 2007, submitted concurrently with a three month extension of time to extend the due date for response to November 2, 2007.

Claims 1, 8, 9 and 10 have been amended to put the claims in better form under U.S. practice, to overcome the Examiner objection to the claims, and to more particularly define the present invention. Support for the claim amendments can be found throughout the specification and the original claims, see, in particular, page 8, lines 7 and 19-22. Thus, claims 1-11 are pending in this application.

In view of this amendment, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration in light of the above amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Objection to the Specification

The disclosure is objected to due to the informalities set forth on page 3, item 4, of the Office Action. Applicant has amended the specification to overcome the Examiner's concerns. Specifically, the hyperlink has been removed and replaced with citations of the references. Thus, withdrawal of this objection is requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for alleged indefiniteness. Applicant has amended the claims to address the Examiner's concerns. Thus, in view of the amendments to the claims, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103

Claims 1-4 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Bauer et al., (Rapid Commun. Mass Spectrom. 14, 924-929 (2000)) or Keough et al., (Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci., Vol. 96, pp. 7131-7136, June 1999). Further, claims 1 and 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Nakanishi et al. (JP 2001-235477). Lastly, claims

1-11 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Turecek (J. Mass Spectrometry. 2002; 37: 1-14) in view of Keough et al. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

To constitute anticipation of the claimed invention under U.S. practice, the prior art reference must literally or inherently teach each and every limitation of the claims. Further, to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, the following three criteria must be satisfied. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. Here, in this case, none of the cited references teach or suggest all of the claim limitations with particular emphasis on the limitations "*preparing an amino acid derivative, said amino acid derivative being negatively charged as a whole molecule and comprising an amino acid having an amino group protected with a protective group and a side chain containing an acidic group*" and "*coupling said amino acid derivative to the N-terminus of the peptide of interest or the fragments thereof to obtain a coupled peptide molecule*".

Based on Applicant's review of the cited references, both Bauer et al. and Keough et al. only teach the derivatization of the N-terminus of the peptide of interest and fragments thereof directly without subjecting the peptide of interest and fragments thereof to a coupling step. In addition, Nakanishi et al. only teach the coupling of the N-terminus of the peptide of interest with a fluorescein compound which does not read on the amino acid derivative of the present invention.

Further, none of the cited references, Bauer et al., Keough et al., Nakanishi et al. and Turecek, teach or suggest that the amino acid derivative is separately prepared from the peptide of interest or fragments thereof as recited in amended claim 1 (i.e. "*preparing an amino acid derivative, said amino acid derivative being negatively charged as a whole molecule and comprising an amino acid having an amino group protected with a protective group and a side chain containing an acidic group*"; "*preparing a peptide of interest or fragments thereof obtained by optionally cleaving the peptide of interest for coupling to said amino acid derivative*"; "*coupling said amino acid derivative to the N-terminus of the peptide of interest or the fragments thereof to obtain a coupled peptide molecule*").

Lastly, none of the cited references teach or suggest that the amino acid derivative itself comprise an amino group protected with a protective group and a side chain containing an acidic group.

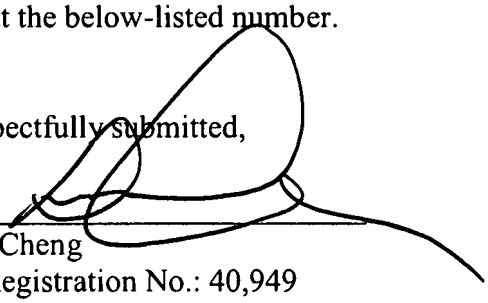
Thus, for these reasons, since none of the cited references teach or suggest all of the claim limitations, these rejections can no longer be sustained and should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, all the claims now pending in the present application are believed to be clearly patentable over the outstanding rejections. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration of the claims in light of the above remarks is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions that could place this application in even better form, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the below-listed number.

Dated: October 31, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

By 
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